

PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY—A Manual of Management. By Ferris Smith, M.D., F.A.C.S., Consultant in Plastic Surgery, Blodgett Memorial Hospital, Grand Rapids, Michigan. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1950. \$15.00.

In a 900-page work, Dr. Ferris Smith of Grand Rapids, Mich., has summarized the experience of his 35 years of plastic surgical practice in a form which is both readily useful and dogmatic in detail for any given surgical procedure. The book is well set up and well illustrated and reviews many accepted procedures in the treatment of congenital and acquired deformities of the head and neck, as well as grafting of burns, and some peripheral plastic operations.

Dr. Smith, who is one of the great pioneers in plastic surgical teaching in the United States, stresses again and again the importance of using local tissue rather than skin-grafts on exposed surfaces of the head and neck. This is a most worthwhile principle and should be followed wherever possible. His techniques of multiple excision and Z-plasty are very useful but are emphasized to the point of overdoing them, particularly as regards the extremities.

The procedures illustrated are for the most part satisfactory and are good standard practice in plastic surgery. On the other hand, some procedures recommended seem unnecessarily complicated with many steps which accomplish little in the way of end result. Particularly notable is a many-staged procedure for total eyelid reconstruction in which other surgeons might feel that obliteration of the socket altogether would give a more satisfactory end result without the tedium of so many operations.

The broader aspects of plastic surgery, which include the care and treatment of carcinoma of the head and neck and its resulting defects, reconstructive surgery of the hand, lower extremity surgery, genito-urinary and gynecologic plastic surgery and some other fields, are covered very lightly in this manual, and one must seek other texts for authoritative procedures if one is to have a well-rounded authority on all phases of the specialty. In defense of this limitation of the text, Dr. Smith states in the preface that "There are many borderline cases occurring in general, genito-urinary and orthopedic surgery, dermatology, etc. It is the author's belief that such conditions as hypospadias and epispadias and the like should be corrected by the urological surgeons, absence of the vaginal tract by the gynecologist, many of the lesions of the tendons, nerves and bones of the hand and feet by an orthopedist." With this, most plastic surgeons will not agree, as the broad general surgical background of modern plastic surgery encompasses many fields which overlap other special fields of endeavor, and the plastic surgeon would feel his prolonged training in various fields to be of limited value if confined to head and neck and surface lesions.

This book is of value both to the medical student and to the interested surgeon in related specialties as well as to the plastic surgeon. It provides, however, but one man's point of view and should be supplemented by reading and experience with other authors for a well-rounded conception of modern plastic surgery.

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ANXIETY IN PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH. By Henriette R. Klein, M.D., Associate in Psychiatry, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons; Howard W. Potter, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, Long Island College of Medicine; and Ruth B. Dyk, M.S., Research Department, New York City Youth Board. Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., 1950. \$2.75.

This slender volume reports the results of interviews with 27 primigravidae (erroneously referred to as primiparae throughout the book) who were attending the public prenatal clinic at the Long Island College Hospital between

September 1945 and June 1946. Interviewing was done by a psychiatric social worker. The authors, two psychiatrists and the above-mentioned social worker, wanted to find out why childbearing is a trying experience for some, but easy and enjoyable for others. The patients were asked about attitudes, misconceptions, superstitions, and anxieties. Because the subjects of the study admittedly had almost no intellectual interests, had been exposed to a minimum of formal education, and were not used to verbalizing about themselves, one wonders about the significance of the information obtained from this peculiar sample of the obstetric population. The 12 points brought out in the summary are well known to most obstetricians who have been observant attendants in any large prenatal clinic. Possibly, however, these concepts are not equally familiar to psychiatrists, for whom the volume may have a modest value.

The appendix contains summaries of the histories of the 27 subjects. The book is nicely made but there is no index.

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THE GENEALOGY OF GYNAECOLOGY—History of the Development of Gynaecology Throughout the Ages—2000 B.C. - 1800 A.D. with excerpts from the many authors who have contributed to the various phases of the subject. By James V. Ricci, A.B., M.D., Clinical Professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, New York Medical College. Second Edition. The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, 1950. \$8.50.

The issuance of a second and enlarged edition of Ricci's "Genealogy of Gynaecology" speaks well not only for the book but also for the intellectual state of our profession which, in spite of the uncertainties of the immediate and somewhat nebulous future, still is in the mood to concern itself with the past of medicine. Like other Ricci contributions to the history of obstetrics and gynecology his *Genealogy* presents a scholarly survey of a huge volume of recorded knowledge beginning with the nebulous past of the second pre-Christian millenium and ending with the close of the 18th century when gynecology was about to emerge from a long and stale impasse. Ricci has succeeded admirably in condensing a monumental mass of information into a readable tome of some 500 pages. He traces the development of gynecologic diagnosis and therapy step by step from the dim past when priests and shamans of the Mediterranean and Far-Eastern worlds were probing into the physiology of the female genital organs, but only to founder in a sea of superstitions, to the dawn of gynecology when John Hunter said in 1785 that he saw no reason why a woman should not suffer spaying without danger as well as other animals do, and that merely making an opening into the abdomen was not highly dangerous. Every page of this treatise is replete with the type of information that stimulates thought and makes the reader pause in wonderment over man's ever-present fallibility.

In writing the development of gynecology Ricci follows the accepted epochal divisions of the history of medicine. Where the past is vague and confused the author contents himself with merely citing the fragmentary bits of information which have come down to us on papyri and clay tablets. Where the knowledge of the past was preserved through word of mouth but not recorded until centuries later he has aimed to clarify obscure issues by comparing the several versions of the recorders. The later knowledge as recorded by the printing press he has sifted and correlated to make a readable whole. As in other publications Ricci presents a wealth of detailed annotations and reliable source of references. The material is presented in an orderly fashion yet it is not of the stuff that makes for casual reading. However, for the discriminating reader and in particular for the student of history, regardless whether medical or otherwise, Ricci's treatise will prove itself invaluable aside from making delightful reading.